**I**

**1. The definition of euphemism**

According to 'The Dictionary of Linguistic Terms' by Akhmanova O. [[1]](#footnote-1) euphemism is “a trope used in indirect, polite, extenuating denomination of any subject or phenomenon.”

Euphemism is a lexical substitution which helps the speaker to avoid responsibility and to make the bad seem good, the unpleasant seem attractive. A euphemism that is a mild, comforting word or evasive expression is used in place of one that may be found offensive or intolerable.

A euphemism and a trope are functionally compared. For instance: “They are addressed as “senior citizens” and congratulated on their attainment of **“golden years”**. In this sentence the euphemisms**“senior citizens”**and “**golden years”**figuratively signify *old age.* They are successfully masking the negative sides of *an old age* concept and used precisely with this purpose. Therefore the euphemism is a tool for softening speech and has a communicative function.

The word euphemism comes from the Greek word ευφημία (euphemia), meaning "the use of words of good omen", which in turn is derived from the Greek word roots *eu* (ευ), "good/well" + pheme (φήμι) "speech/speaking", meaning glory and flattering speech. In Dvorezky's[[2]](#footnote-2) Old Greek-Russian dictionary[[3]](#footnote-3) the words *eu* and *pheme* are translated as "произносить слова благоприятного значения, то есть воздерживаться от неподобающих слов, не кощунствовать или хранить благовейное молчание". In other words, it means speaking well by not speaking at all, that is by keeping a holy silence. Etymologically, euphemizing is the opposite of blasphemy (evil-speaking).

Here are some other definitions of euphemisms:

* A euphemism is only a more polite and more cultured form of what is called the taboo dictionary [Vandries , 1937: 206]. This definition is not considered as a precise one because the author does not make it clear what words are related to the taboo dictionary;
* “Euphemisms are emotionally neutral words or expressions used instead of words synonymous to them but rude, tactless and indecent for the speaker” [Arapova, 1990];
* “A euphemism is a kind of periphrasis”. Akhmanova’s dictionary says that periphrasis is “троп, состоящий в замене обычного слова (простого обозначения некоторого предмета одним словом) описательным выражением.” Thus, there are no words like *stewardess* and *fireman* in the staff schedule. Instead of them politically correct items **“flight attendant”** and **“firefighter”** are used.

In “Politics and the English Language”[[4]](#footnote-4), George Orwell writes that political language is designed “to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable”. Some euphemisms do distort and mislead; but some are motivated by kindness.   
A euphemism is a kind of lie, and the lies peoples and countries tell themselves are revealing. For instance, in American culture, is something damaging or discreditable does come out, the next best thing is to minimize its awfulness. A leak of radioactivity from a nuclear reactor, for example, may be played down as an **“energy release”**, which carefully avoids any mention of radioactivity.

B. Larin notes that “euphemism by its semantic structure is a kind of a trope, e.g. metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche. The distinction from other tools is in its nomination and use. The purpose of euphemism is not the figurative representation of reality as tropes of literal language but obscuration, coverage of unsightly phenomenon of reality or of immodest thoughts or intents”. L. Timofeev[[5]](#footnote-5) gives the following definition of euphemism: “it is a specific kind of metonymy where rude expressions are substituted more polite ones to soften the form of expression but not the meaning”. A. Katsev[[6]](#footnote-6) gives another definition of euphemism: “there are some indirect substitutions of fearful, disgraceful or odious, contributing to the soothing effect, evoking to life by moral or religious motives” **(есть способствующие эффекту смягчения косвенные заменители наименований страшного, постыдного или одиозного, вызываемые к жизни моральными или религиозными мотивами)**. Also A. Katsev emphasizes three aspects of euphemia: social, psychological and linguistic properly.

There are some examples of euphemisms:

The words like **“diplomacy”**, **“to borrow”**, **“gratitude”** are used instead of words such *lie*, *to steal* and *a bribe*. Lots of euphemisms can be found in English fiction. For example, *swearing* is substituted by the phrase “coarseness of expression”.

During analyzing of euphemisation some of main aspects which are typical for euphemisms we need to take into account. Firstly, it is a functional aspect. B. Larin offered the most general functional classification of euphemism by its spheres of use. He divided these spheres into three categories: 1) widespread euphemisms of the national literal language (death, illness, fears – **“pass away”** instead of *death*) ; 2) class and professional euphemisms **(“surgical strikes”** for *bombing* in political language); 3) everyday “family” euphemisms **(“adult entertainment”** for *pornography*). Depending on spheres of use, context and other circumstances, euphemisms can involve different functional nomination. The function of soothing the meaning of rude, sharp and taboo words or expressions can mainly be found in examples given above.

Euphemistic expressions are used practically in all spheres of speech communication. I.Galiperin[[7]](#footnote-7) singles out four traditional spheres of its use:   
1) religion; 2) moral sphere; 3) medicine; 4) parliament.

L. Barkova[[8]](#footnote-8) notices that “the conceptual spheres, which are fully described fully in linguistic literature, are strongly attracted by euphemistic nominations : illiness, death, physical and mental defects, sex, physiologic functions and so on…The social spheres of communications, as Barkova underlines, “oriented to euphemisms have acquired the fragmentary coverage…Herewith, the most urgent demand in euphemisms is felt by politicians and advertisers”. Nowadays, there is a transference of original euphemism into public spheres: political, military, commercial where it can do more harm than in sex, death and illness’ field. Barkova also emphasizes that the choice of euphemisms in politics is characterized by the pragmatic factor, and euphemism itself is a highly effective method of influence upon public opinion.

That is why the subject of my analysis is political euphemisms.

**(Л. Баркова отмечает, что « в лингвистической литературе достаточно подробно описаны понятийные сферы, тяготеющие к эвфемистическим наименованиям: болезни, смерть, физические и умственные недостатки, секс, физиологические функции и др. … Социальные же сферы общения, как подчеркивает Л. Баркова, “ориентирующиеся на эвфемизмы, получили лишь фрагментарное освещение… При этом наиболее острую потребность в эвфемизмах испытывают политические деятели и составители рекламных текстов”. В наше время происходит перемещение подлинного эвфемизма в общественные сферы, политическую, военную, коммерческую, где они способны принести гораздо больше вреда, чем в области болезни, смерти и секса. Л. Баркова подчеркивает, что выбор эвфемизмов в политике обусловлен в первую очередь прагматическим фактором, а сами эвфемизмы – весьма эффективное средство воздействия на общественное сознание широких слоев общества.**

1. Ахманова О.С. Словарь лингвистических терминов. М.: Советская Энциклопедия, 1966. С.521. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Дворецкий И.Х. Древнегреческо-русский словарь. М.: Государственное издательство иностранных и национальных словарей, 1958. С 703. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Orwell G. Politics and the political language. London: Penguin books, 1946. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Словарь литературоведческих терминов. Ред. С 48 сост.: Л. И. Тимофеев и С. В. Тураев. М., 'Просвещение', 1974. 509 с. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Кацев А.М. Языковое табу и эвфемия. – Ленинград, 1988. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Гальперин И.Р. Текст как объект лингвистического исследования. М.: Наука, 1981. – 140 с. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Баркова, Л.А. Эвфемизмы как единицы языковой системы и социальные сферы их употребления// Системная организация английской фразеологии: Сб. науч. тр. - М.: 1986. - 356 с.  
     
    [↑](#footnote-ref-8)